

April 2007

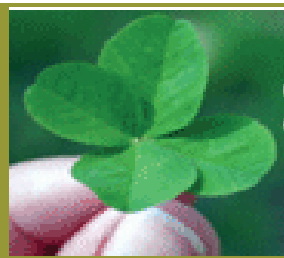
Volume 1, Issue 1

Extensions

Special recognition is given to the following soldiers for their dedication to the Arizona Army National Guard

SFC Antonio Dinicola
SSG Chad Adams
SSG Gary Benzi
SSG Joe Brown
SSG Claudia Garcia
SSG Matthew Langseth
SSG David Tapia
SSG Richard Ulmer
SSG Dimitri Vandriel
SGT Ruben Adame
SGT Luis Baldenegro
SGT Robert Cochran
SGT Bradford Frey
SGT Curtis Foster
SGT Michael Hernandez
SGT Luis Laguna
SGT Alejandro Montano
SGT Brent Nelson
SGT Troy Roberts
SGT Matthew Wells
SGT Mark Viramontes
SPC Chadrick Ackerman
SPC Phillip Bencomo
SPC Robert Brashier
SPC Jason Drissel
SPC Carl Hunter
SPC Zanette Franco
SPC Eunice Guerra
SPC Rector Loren
SPC Scott Rarick
SPC Daniel Sheahan

Special thanks to SSG Greg Mackay for his creativity in naming the Task Force Desert Hawk Newsletter. A contest was held to name the newsletter and SSG Mackay's entry, "The Desert Hawk Squawk" was chosen by the Task Force Commander, LTC Kwan.



DESERT HAWK SQUAWK

Desert Hawk Takes Command of Aviation Operations in Salerno

By Army SFC Krishna M. Gamble
Task Force Pegasus Public Affairs Office

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan

- Soldiers from the active, Reserve and National Guard components of the Army joined together to form one of the largest attack aviation task forces to operate in Afghanistan.

Task Force Talon passed its mission of providing air-assault, attack, convoy, troop and supply movement along with a myriad of other aviation operations to Task Force Desert Hawk, headed by the 1st Battalion, 285th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion of the Arizona Army National Guard, in a transfer of authority ceremony.

"These two organizations represent excellence in Army Aviation," said Col. Kelly Thomas, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade Commander.

"You are a team of teams, and you continue to impress me. You are [one of the many] reasons we do great work here in Afghanistan."

TF Talon assumed aviation operations in March 2006 and set a new standard for other task forces to follow by rebuilding four fuel and armament points that have become the model for the rest of the theater. TF Talon also constructed and established direct maintenance facilities and created a battalion level operation area for the first time in this region of Afghanistan – all this was accomplished without the loss of a single Soldier.

"I would like to thank my Company Commanders and First Sergeants because we could not have accomplished [any of this]



LTC Kwan and CSM Powers unravel the Battalion Colors

without their leadership," said Lt. Col. Collier Lipple, TF Talon commander.

As the largest unit, at the time, to deploy in Arizona history, the 1-285th ARB has transitioned from the AH-64A Apache to the AH-64D Apache Longbow, the world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopter. In April 2006, the unit deployed to Fort Hood,

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Soldiers in Bagram Receive High Recognition

By Army SPC Geneve Mankel
Task Force Desert Hawk

BAGRAM, Afghanistan- Soldiers from E CO 1st 285th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion were presented with the Task Force Pegasus Brigade Coin, after their exemplary performance when they volunteered to go above and beyond the call of duty.

After the unforeseen events that befell Bagram in February, the originally tasked "clearing" team failed to show up for duty.

SFC Eric C. Stewart, the Force Protection Officer said they were "at a loss until three



SPC Chadrick Ackerman shows-off his Task Force Pegasus Brigade Coin awarded to him by CSM Brasfield.

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Desert Hawk Takes Command...Continued from page 1

Texas to undergo the unit fielding and training program in preparation for their deployment here in support of the 82nd CAB.

"It was gruelling ... a lot of training," said Spc. Geneve Mankel, flight operations specialist and a senior at Arizona State University.



CSM Brasfield congratulates SPC Vance on his achievement

"I think we're up for the challenge," said Maj. Michael Jackson, air medical physician assistant. Jackson, an Active Guard Reserve Soldier, is an emergency room physician at the Western Army Aviation Training Site in Marana, Az.

"This is an important milestone for both task forces,"

said Lt. Col. Donald Y. Kwan, TF Desert Hawk Commander. "We owe it to our Soldiers and their families to ensure that everyone returns home safely and to leave Afghanistan better able to support themselves."

Soldiers in Bagram...Continued from page 1

highly motivated soldiers from the 1-285th ARB arrived on the scene, asking if they could be of assistance."

SGT Noe Rodriguez, SPC Chadrick Ackerman and SPC Darrell Vance volunteered to be part of the "clearing" team. Under the direction of SFC Stewart the three soldiers helped to ensure that the camp was clear.

"Their actions demonstrated that they received some

very good training...after seven and a half years in a Ranger Battalion I can detect good training," said SFC Stewart.

SGT Rodriguez, SPC Ackerman and SPC Vance were awarded with the Brigade Coin by the Task Force Command Sergeant Major David Brasfield.

Great Job soldiers!



SGT Rodriguez stands before CSM Brasfield to receive his coin

COMMANDERS CORNER



You can take the man out of Wildcat Country but you can't take Wildcat Country out of the Man.

SPOTLIGHT ON SALERNO

The Month of March brought with it many visitors to FOB Salerno and Bagram Air Field. From News crews to Governors, Task Force Desert Hawk was host to those that support us and wish to acknowledge the hard work we do.

ABC15 “Arizonans in Afghanistan” Feature Reporter Visits Troops

By Army SPC Geneve Mankel
Task Force Desert Hawk

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan- The 1st 285th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion was proud to welcome the first and only reporter to ever be embedded with the unit.

Reporter Karen Schaler and photographer Filip Kapsa from the ABC Phoenix affiliate, ABC 15, KNXV-TV made their way to Bagram Air Field and Forward Operating Base Salerno.

“By living with these soldiers you really get a feel for what they are going through and who they are and the true sacrifices they are making,” Schaler has said about why she chose to be embedded with the 1-285th ARB.

The news team traveled halfway around the world with the intent of honoring the soldiers who make up the 1-285th ARB by telling their story to the world.

In just one week and two locations Schaler and Kapsa

were able to shoot hours of film, take hundreds of pictures, interview numerous soldiers and film countless shout-outs to families and friends.

As the news teams stay in Afghanistan came to an end a flag presentation was held to commemorate their hard work and dedication.

LTC Donald Y. Kwan, the Task Force Desert Hawk Commander, presented Schaler and Kapsa

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Reporter Karen Schaler and Photographer Filip Kapsa with troops from the 1-285th ARB

Armed Forces Network Keeps Eyes on the Skies in Salerno



SSG Edgar Anima gets interviewed by AFN reporter CPL Nicholas DiOrio

By Army SPC Geneve Mankel
Task Force Desert Hawk

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan- Media Coverage of Task Force Desert Hawk continued through the month of March as it welcomed Marine Corporal Nicholas DiOrio from the Armed Forces Network (AFN).

While on assignment in Salerno CPL DiOrio profiled a Blackhawk Crew from the 2-

82nd Aviation Assault Battalion and soldiers from the 640th Aviation Support Battalion.

The Blackhawk crew that CPL DiOrio covered included pilots, CW3 Santiago Figueroa and CPT Brian Merkl along with crewchiefs SPC Jeremy Lebiha and SGT Chad Harvey. The crew was able to provide first-hand information on flying Blackhawk Helicopters to CPL DiOrio.

Also interviewed was SSG Edgar Anima, a maintenance

sergeant with the 640th ASB. SSG Anima provided insight on the impact ground personnel have on aircraft mission readiness.

Blackhawk helicopters are an essential part of the mission in Afghanistan and it was with great pleasure to have AFN acknowledge the soldiers that keep the aircraft mission ready and the pilots and crewmembers that fly them.

Arizona Governor Meets and Greets Soldiers

By Army SPC Geneve Mankel
Task Force Desert Hawk

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan- The Task Force Desert Hawk Soldiers that hail from Arizona got a taste of home when they were visited by Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano.

After spending time with troops in Iraq, Governor Napolitano traveled, for her first time, to Afghanistan.

Governor Napolitano has been a constant advocate and friend of the Troops of the 1st 285th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, she even commented on seeing familiar faces of aviators who have flown her back

home.

Governor Napolitano wanted to personally thank the troops for their service and to remind them that there are many people back home who are thinking of them. She also wanted to assure them that if there is anything they need she would try and acquire it.

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“It’s important for me to come and see what [the soldiers] do and how it fits in the big picture,” Governor Napolitano said about her trip.

SPOTLIGHT ON SALERNO CONT.

Aviation General Ensures Welfare of Troops

By Army SPC Geneve Mankel
Task Force Desert Hawk



BG Mundt answers questions from the Desert Hawk troops.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan- Brigadier General Stephen D. Mundt, the Director of Army Aviation took time out of his busy schedule to visit Task Force Desert Hawk.

While at FOB Salerno BG Mundt visited various sections of the Task Force to talk with the troops and discuss any problems they might have.

When speaking with SGT Kim Bayze, the Task Force Retention NCO, BG Mundt joked that he was ready to reenlist after being informed of

the reenlistment bonus amount.

“What you’ll feel when you get done is a real sense of reward,” BG Mundt told troops who might feel discouraged.

The Brigadier General also had a luncheon with a select group of soldiers to talk with them on an intimate level. One of the big concerns for the Brigadier General was the lack of options soldiers had for making calls to families back home and the amount soldiers have to pay in order to have personal internet connections.

A ceremony was held where Brigadier General Mundt was able to address the majority of the Task Force Soldiers. He recognized soldiers who reenlisted and ac-

knowledgeed that those soldiers are not only “reenlisting themselves but reenlisting their families,” and for their sacrifices he is thankful.

At the end of the ceremony BG Mundt held an open question forum where he answered questions from soldiers regarding issues with software programs, stop-loss and the process of future National Guard deployments.

As BG Mundt said his final thank you and goodbye he reassured the soldiers that “no matter what any media says Arizona loves her soldiers.”

“no matter what any media says Arizona loves her soldiers,” BG Mundt said

CHAPLAIN’S CORNER

By 1st Lieutenant Kurt Bishop
Task Force Desert Hawk Chaplain

“The greater part of our happiness depends on our disposition and not our circumstances.”

As I was thinking about what to say for this month’s newsletter, I was frustrated by the fact that I could not come up with any “pearls of wisdom” to pass along to the families back home. But as this was going on, I was con-

stantly struck by the attitudes and disposition of the men and women that I serve, and that I serve with. As I walk through our battalion areas and visit with the men and women of our task force, there is always one thing that stands out. Although our circumstances are not the best, the outlook of these men and women is positive.

In spite of the fact that we are thousands of miles from home and in harms way, the men and women of Task Force Desert Hawk continue to bless

me and those around us with their spirit and their smiles. No matter what the circumstances, they continue to excel and overcome the obstacles that they encounter. They encourage and lift each other up and do the same thing for me. It is truly a blessing to be here in this place with these people.

“I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of contentment in every situation.” Philippians 4:12

Task Force Commander...Continued from page 2

ST. PATRICKS DAY 5K AND 10K RACE



SGT Ramon Gomez accepts his First Place Medal for winning the 10K race

By Army SPC Geneve Mankel
Task Force Desert Hawk

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan— This month Task Force Fury, the Ground Command Unit at FOB Salerno sponsored a St. Patrick's Day 5k and 10k Race. Soldiers from Task Force Desert Hawk held an impressive presence at the

race with 85 of the 328 participating soldiers being from TF Desert Hawk. SGT Ramon Gomez from HHC, 1-285th ARB won a First Place Medal for having the fastest time in his age group in the 10K portion of the race. SGT Gomez also came in 3rd overall for the

10K. Congratulations to all the participants in race and keep on running!

AWARDS



Army Commendation Medal:

SPC Samantha Sullivan

For her exemplary performance and dedication to duty while being assigned as a health care specialist at the WAATS troop medical clinic

SPC Wendy Khamphong

For her meritorious achievement while serving as the Headquarters Company Supply Specialist and Battalion Armorer.



Army Achievement Medal:

SGT Thomas Tyree

SSG Edmund Bustamante

SPC Corrisa Burnside

WO1 Marco Elsner

SPC Brandon Jackson

SGT Manuel Bustamante

SPC Edward Seright

SFC Deon Lotshaw

SSG Casey Peterson

SPC Reid Molzow

PFC John Burger

SGT Noe Rodriguez

Section of the Month

with a United States

Task Force Desert Hawk S-1 Section

The S-1 section plays a vital role within the Desert Hawk Task Force. Almost all administrative actions are completed or processed through the S-1 section. The primary function of the S-1 section is personnel tracking and management. The troops in this shop track all personnel currently in country and also work to fill current or future troop vacancies. The S-1 shop ensures that Soldiers are receiving the proper pay and allowances and also troubleshoots any pay problems or issues. They are responsible for timely completion and processing of appraisals, awards, leaves and passes and reenlistments. The S-1 shop ensures that eligible Soldiers are promoted, and that all promotion paperwork is correctly processed and completed. There is a legal clerk within this shop who assists with wills, powers of attorney and Military Justice matters. The S-1 shop is also responsible for the conduct of military ceremonies. Possibly the most important responsibility of the S-1 shop is the receipt and disbursal of mail from home. Mail from home is one

of the biggest morale boosters for the Desert Hawk troops and is a job the S-1 section takes seriously. In short, if the S-1 shop is doing its job and all of the administrative actions are properly taken care of, the Task Force Desert Hawk Soldiers are freed up to focus on their jobs and not worry about the paperwork.

The S-1 shop is comprised of:

CPT Erika Salerno, S-1 OIC: from Mesa, AZ – also flies the AH-64D, this is her first deployment.

SFC James Borchardt, S-1 NCOIC: from Tucson, AZ – has been a member of the 1-285 since 1988, his first deployment.

SSG Adams, PSNCO: from Queen Creek, AZ – has been with the 1-285 for 3 years and is expecting his 5th child in September, his first deployment.

SSG Lupecelia Leon, PSNCO: from Tucson, AZ – this is her second deployment in support of the War on Terrorism

SSG Clayton Waddell, PSNCO: from Avondale, AZ – his first deployment, previously worked at State HQ and volunteered to deploy with us

SGT Kimberly Bayze, Retention NCO: from Tucson, AZ – also on her

second deployment

SGT Gabriel Ochoa, HR NCO: from El Mirage, AZ – his second deployment, also came to us from State HQ

SGT Beverly Fortner, HHC Clerk: from Tucson, AZ – her first deployment, a part of the 1-285th since 2001

SPC Miguel Garcia, Legal Clerk: from Phoenix, AZ – graduated from South Mountain High in 2004, his first deployment

SPC Daniel Fousse, HR Clerk: from Tucson, AZ – graduated from Mountain View High in 2005, his first deployment

PFC Joshua Tweedy, Mail Clerk: from Phoenix, AZ – a Maryvale High Graduate, this is his first deployment



ABC 15...Continued from page 3



MSG Gary Sarten gets interviewed by ABC 15 reporter Karen Schaler

Flag that was flown over Afghanistan.

As put by CPT Erika Salerno, the Task Force Desert Hawk Public Affairs Officer, "the flag was dedicated to the news crew as a thank you from the Arizona National Guard for sacrificing time away from friends, family and creature comforts to tell our story and get our 'hellos' back to loved ones."

Upon returning home to Phoenix, Schaler and Kapsa got to work on producing the stories that they shot. The stories focused on the everyday lives of the soldiers, from their

day to day activities, to their jobs to how they feel about the mission and being away from home.

The stories began to air mid March with nightly exclusive reports running throughout the month.

In conjunction with the on-air stories, the ABC 15 website has an entire section dedicated to the 1-285th ARB soldiers. The *Arizonans in Afghanistan* section of the webpage has proved to be extremely popular.

Schaler explained that they had a goal of receiving 30,000 hits and were incredibly sur-

prised and excited to find out the *Arizonans in Afghanistan* section had reached 50,000 hits in its first week.

The website is a very useful resource; you can view pictures and newscasts, read Karen Schaler's blog and learn about Afghanistan and the 1-285th ARB.

The news team is scheduled to return to Afghanistan later this year and continue coverage of the 1-285th ARB throughout its deployment.

Desert Hawk Becomes "All American"

By Army SPC Geneve Mankel
Task Force Desert Hawk



FORWARD OPERATION BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan- As the rain came pouring down on them, the soldiers that make up Task Force Desert Hawk awaited patiently to don their newly earned combat patch.

The patch that is worn on the right sleeve of a service member's uniform not only indicates that a soldier has

served in a combat zone but also gives reference to the unit the soldier deployed with.

After serving thirty days in Afghanistan, soldiers from Task Force Desert Hawk attached the prestigious 82nd Airborne Division Patch that famously displays the double A's. The 82nd Division was organized in 1917 at Camp Gordon, Georgia. Since members of the division came from all 48 states, the unit was given the nickname "All-American,"

and the famed double A's were established.

So it was on this rainy day in March that the Task Force Desert Hawk soldiers were directed by Aviation Brigade Colonel Kelly Thomas to become part of the history and long standing tradition of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Arizona Governor...Continued from page 3

"It's important for me to come and see what [the soldiers] do and how it fits in the big picture," Governor Napolitano said about her trip.

At an informal and intimate ceremony LTC Kwan, the Task Force Desert Hawk Commander, thanked the Governor on behalf of all the soldiers and presented her with a framed Desert Hawk poster signed by all the troops.

At the ceremony Governor Napolitano was also very pleased to present awards, take pictures and answer questions from Soldiers.

To those families back home she "can't stress enough the importance of sending messages to the troops." The Governor even offered the Soldiers the opportunity to send messages back home to be delivered by her Office via

telephone and email.

Although the trip may have been short-lived it was magnanimous in its gesture. The support offered by Governor Napolitano and the State of Arizona will forever be embedded in the spirit of the Unit.



LTC Donald Kwan and CSM Patrick Powers present Governor Napolitano with a signed Desert Hawk Poster

Task Force Desert Hawk Newsletter



Contact Information:

First and Last Name	John Doe
Company 1/285th ARB	HHC 1/285th ARB
Task Force assignment	TF Desert Hawk
APO AE #####	APO AE 09314

Salerno- TF Desert Hawk 09314
Bagram- TF Talon 09354
Kandahar- TF Corsair 09355

For Questions or Concerns for 1-285th ARB please
contact CPT Sellaro at 520-616-

Happy Birthday to the following soldiers who celebrated a birthday in the month of March

Brandon L. Adolph
Ashby Matthew
Kevin M. Bibb
Theodore J. Bill
Crystal R. Blossom
Paul C. Brown Jr
Edmund G Bustamante
Darrell S. Chrisman
Andrew S. Christensen
Kevin, A. Cox
Bradford K. Frey
Tony D. Garcia
James C. Gatley,
Stephen Giltinan
Maribel Grijalva
John V. Karford
Allen D. Lewis
Gregory P. Mackay
Colin Mckeand
Frank A. Perrone
Casey J Peterson
Wilfredo Ruiz
Tammy L. Simmons
Samuel Stalons
Trajan Z. Thompson
Gareth L. Turner
Rudy F. Valenzuela
Joshua C Vurro
Jason S. Watson
Kenneth L. Whirley
Pamela Windless
Michael Wright
Danielle R. Zamaniego
Nicholas J. Lyman



View of the Korengal Valley from an AH-64D



SFC Cesar Morales poses with Governor Janet Napolitano



SGT Cowdry from Charlie 2-82 is lowered by hoist from a UH-60L



First time father LT Mitch Lobman holding his newborn daughter Makayla Lobman.



SGT Ruben Adame swears in after reenlisting



CSM Powers Maintains the Task Force's "Award Winning Grass"



Governor Napolitano assists Safety Officer CW3 Jessie Scruggs with presenting the Unit Safety Award to SSG Casey Peterson